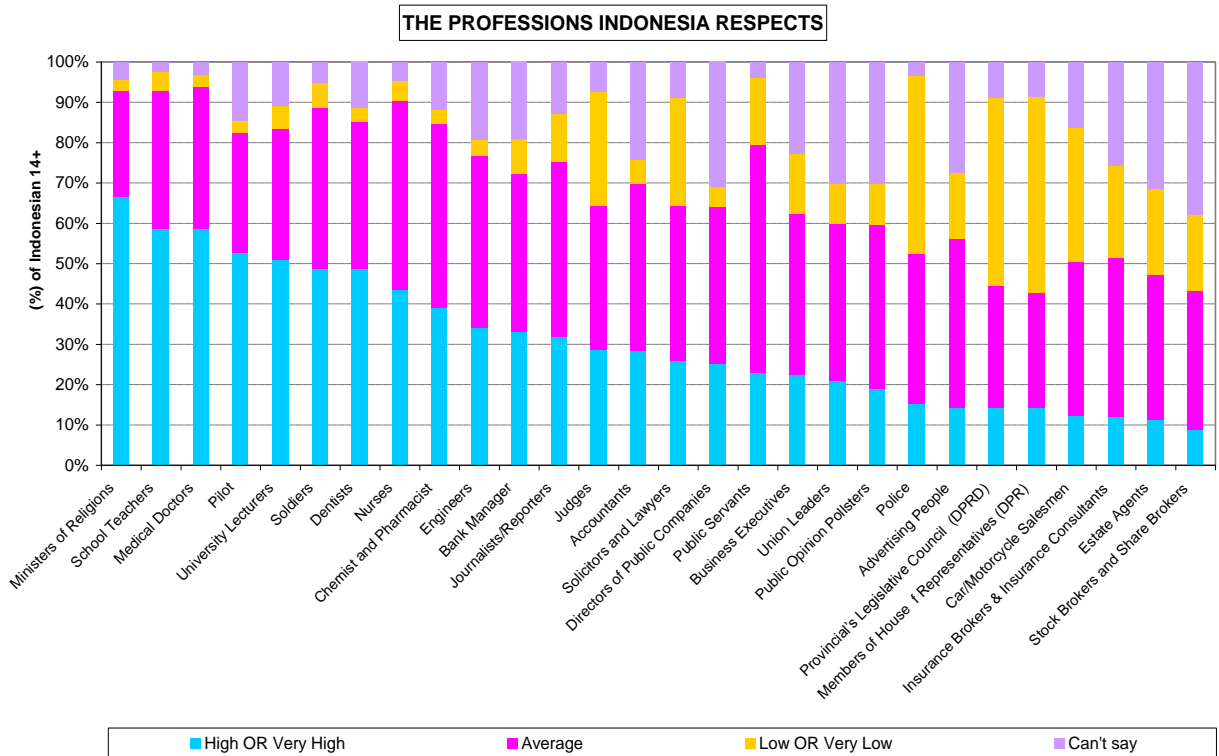


## Varying Respect for Professionals Reveals Many a Surprise.

God is great. His messengers are greater than other mortals who walk the earth. Or so most Indonesians believe.

In a first-of-its-kind survey across the cities, towns and villages of Indonesia, 1922 respondents 14 years and older were asked which professions they respected: very highly, highly, average, lowly, very lowly. A total of 28 professions were offered for comment. Though by no means complete, the range listed a variety straddling practices from the humble to the lofty. To side-step the obvious, farmers and taxi-drivers were not included. The results garnered offer many surprises, while confirming some of the disdain many have harboured for years. In general, the younger group tend to have higher levels of respect for most professions when compared with their older counterparts. Women have lower levels of admiration than men almost across the board. But there were no major noticeable differences of opinion between urban and rural respondents.

At the top of the professional hierarchy are the men of god. Ministers of religions were rated most highly, with almost 7 out of 10 Indonesians giving them a lot if not some respect. 26 per cent gave them an ‘average’ with only 3 per cent holding them in low esteem. School teachers and doctors came next, very close to each other in the national rankings. This is particularly reassuring for Indonesia’s future as professionals from the key sectors of health and education have been of questionable standards in the past. Pilots overtook university lecturers in the rankings, the recent history of the aviation industry hasn’t hurt their stature badly. Soldiers, dentist and nurses followed closely in that order, after the lecturers.



Pharmacists fared better than engineers, the latter equalled only by bank managers and journalists. This group enjoys the respect of almost 40 per cent of the population. Bringing up the next tier are accountants and judges, equal in stature. Perception is reality, speaking well for the people who manage the money but rather poorly on those entrusted to uphold the law. The lawyers came close to the judges in rank, doing even more damage to the respectability of the bench. The three professions are admired by less than 30 per cent of Indonesians.

One in four people respect our company directors, public servants and business executives. This will be a sobering fact for many, nursing unrealistic notions of themselves in their ivory towers. Equally true for the next pair, union leaders and opinion pollsters. Then come the police, advertising people, as well as the members of DPRD and DPR. They enjoy the respect of around 15 per cent of the population.

Bringing up the tail are the proverbial car salesman and insurance agents with around 12 per cent of people holding them in high esteem. But scraping the bottom in Indonesia are real estate agents and stockbrokers, at barely 10 per cent. This is unlike several other countries with similar polls have been conducted, where money-related professionals fare considerably better.

Now we know how we really feel about our fellow workers, as a nation.

The poll in Indonesia was conducted in tandem with Roy Morgan Single Source, a syndicated survey with over 25,000 respondents 14 years and older interviewed each year. Almost 90 per cent of the population is covered, from the cities, towns and villages around the country. The data is updated every 90 days.

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